

Ban on sodium cyanide, Compound 1080 and Other Reforms Are Recommended Based on Sacramento Bee Investigative Series

In response to revelations in a recent investigative series published in the Sacramento Bee, The Humane Society of the United States sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take swift action to address the most critical problems with its Wildlife Services program.

The HSUS has urged reform of Wildlife Services for many years, especially for its lethal predator control programs. The Sacramento Bee series by reporter Tom Knudson uncovered many problems with the program, describing it as “coming under fire from scientists, former employees and others who say it often doesn’t work and can set off a chain reaction of unintended, often negative consequences.”

“The Sacramento Bee’s investigation laid bare so many of the unacceptable and cruel practices that Wildlife Services conducts on a daily basis,” said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The HSUS. “Agriculture Secretary Vilsack must take a fresh and honest look at this program, and overhaul an archaic, wasteful, and destructive system. He can start by halting the government’s use of two deadly poisons by federal predator control personnel.”

In its letter, The HSUS recommends an immediate ban on the use of sodium cyanide (currently used in M-44 sodium cyanide capsules) and Compound 1080 by federal agents. These highly toxic and indiscriminate poisons present risks to non-target wildlife, family pets, human safety and the environment, and are ineffective and unnecessary.

The HSUS described other pressing concerns with Wildlife Services’ practices, which the Sacramento Bee series called “indiscriminate, at odds with science, inhumane and sometimes illegal.” Wildlife Services’ programs directly and indirectly harm millions of animals every year, including many unintended targets of Wildlife Services’ control activities, and without proven benefit to the public. In fact, more than 3.7 million animals were reportedly killed by Wildlife Services in 2011 alone. It is ineffective and costly, spending millions of tax dollars to benefit a small number of private businesses and special interests. The programs also lack public accountability and the agency routinely provides incomplete responses to public information requests, relies on out-of-date and missing National Environment Policy Act compliance and

lacks transparency at all levels.

Reps. **John Campbell, R-Calif.**, and Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., introduced legislation in March 2012 to curtail the use of two highly toxic predator poisons by Wildlife Services. The Compound 1080 and Sodium Cyanide Elimination Act, H.R. 4214, would ban Sodium fluoroacetate, commonly known as Compound 1080, and prohibit the use of sodium cyanide for lethal predator control.